

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**33 St Mary's Road, Southampton,
Hampshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: SOU1933

(SU 4238 1235)

**33 St Mary's Road,
Southampton, Hampshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Mr Stephen Hurley**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code: SOU 1933

June 2022

Summary

Site name: 33 St Mary's Road, Southampton, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 4238 1235

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 10th March-7th April 2022

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: David Sanchez, Andy Taylor and Jon Tierney

Site code: SOU 1933

Summary of results: A small number of cut features were observed but all datable to the late 19th or 20th centuries. An area of land levelling of similar date presumably related to construction of the main terraced house was also observed. No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading. The archive will be deposited with Southampton City Council's museums service in due course and a digital copy of the archive will be transferred to the Archaeology Data Service.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 10.06.22 Steve Preston ✓ 07.06.22

33 St Mary's Road, Southampton, Hampshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Report 22/53

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 33 St Mary's Road, Southampton, Hampshire (SU 4238 1235) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stephen Hurley.

Planning permission (21/00807/FUL) has been gained from Southampton City Council for the conversion and extension of the existing property. The consent is subject to conditions (4–6) relating to archaeology requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the City's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Ingrid Peckham, Planning Archaeologist with Southampton City Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Sanchez, Andy Taylor and Jon Tierney between 10th March and 7th April 2022. The TVAS project code is SMRS22/53 and the site code is SOU 1933.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Southampton City Council's museums service in due course. A digital copy will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south-eastern side of central Southampton (Fig. 1). The contours shown on the 1846 map of Southampton show an NNW/SSE aligned dry valley across the area surrounding the site. The site itself sits at a height of *c.*7.2m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), over 1m lower than the surface of St Mary's Road which borders the plot to the east (Fig. 2). The topography of the wider area rises up from *c.* 2.7m aOD at the river Itchen, some 850m to the east, to *c.* 18.6m aOD to the west. The area is characterised by streets of terraced houses to the north and east built as part of the Nichols Town development in the 19th century, and modern roads and development to the west and south. The underlying geology is mapped as River Terrace Deposits (BGS 1987) of sand and gravel, but the geology of the local area has been shown in recent years to be brickearth deposits according to the results of archaeological investigations in the vicinity.

Archaeological background

A search of the Historic Environment Record was carried out on the 22nd February 2022 with a radius of 250m showing the local area to be rich in archaeological deposits. The search returned 68 ‘monuments’ and 43 ‘events’ (archaeological investigations) in the area. The archaeological potential of the site is reflected in its location within a ‘Local Area of Archaeological Potential’, as defined in the Southampton Local Plan and Core Strategy, LAAP 8 (City centre and Itchen Ferry), which includes the zone of the Middle Saxon town of *Hamwic*. This was established on the west bank of the River Itchen around modern-day St Mary’s church from around AD700 (Morton 1992).

The site has the potential to contain remains typical of Saxon occupation such as pits, wells, structural remains (most probably negative features), and perhaps surfaces including street and other gravel surfaces. There is debate concerning the settlement’s status and whether *Hamwic* may have been part of a North Sea and English Channel trading zone, with evidence cited in support of this in the form of the provenances of quern stones, pottery and coins. This settlement went into decline in the 9th century albeit with occupation still documented around St Mary’s Church which continued throughout the Medieval period. Due to the dry valley character of this area there is the potential of stratified deposits above the natural geology.

The closest archaeological investigations and finds to the proposed site are located within 50m from the site at 49 St Mary’s Road to the north-west (SOU 423), 129 St Mary’s Road to the north-east (SOU 198) and Rowlands Car park to the south-west (SOU 97 and SOU 525). The watching briefs and trial trenching found possible prehistoric ditches and Middle Saxon pits, postholes and stakeholes all with very little dating evidence, some bone, iron, daub and low numbers of late Saxon pottery and Medieval pottery. The earliest evidence were likely late Iron Age gullies and postholes with some associated pottery.

The highest concentration of archaeological remains are located south-east and north-west of the site and include prehistoric evidence through to Roman, Saxon and Medieval such as Charlotte Place (SOU 1281) to the north-west. The majority of archaeological evidence has been found during a variety of watching briefs and excavations during the development of this area in Southampton (intense building occurring throughout the 1970-90s). Around St Mark’s Road (SOU 1408) and St Andrews Road (SOU 248) to the southeast, a number of pits were found Middle Saxon in date and more than likely associated with the *Hamwic* settlement.

Further archaeological investigations have taken place in the vicinity of the development site. For example, all along St Mary’s Road (SOU 423; SOU 1112; SOU 321; SOU 379; SOU 964; SOU 198; SOU 259; SOU 401; SOU 51) there was evidence of Middle Saxon and some Medieval with some suggestion of Roman occupation.

These are largely marked by pits with evidence of metal working, domestic refuse, daub and evidence of small industry such as weaving. St Mary's Road is a continuation of St Mary's Street to the south running north. Investigations at Brinton's Road (SOU 404; SOU 887) also found Middle Saxon evidence along with Medieval and Post-medieval agricultural evidence and Roman pottery sherds. A small Roman and Iron Age presence is evident across the area including around Nichols Town (SOU 52) and Rowlands Car park very nearby (SOU 97) at <50m away.

The highest concentration of archaeological evidence exists across all time periods around Six Dials to the southeast (SOU 23; SOU 24; SOU 26; SOU 30; SOU 31; SOU 169; SOU 258; SOU 630), the remains found range from prehistoric flints, Iron Age pottery, a large number of Roman coin findspots, roads and ceramics, a Middle Saxon cemetery and evidence of Middle Saxon small industry along with a large boundary ditch which runs in the direction towards the proposed site. This high concentration could be attributed to a bias caused by investigations initiated due to major roadworks.

Two detailed historic maps of central Southampton were consulted from 1846 and 1870. These showed the site was a part of a strip field system until 1846 and that St Mary's Road was put in place as a part of a straightening of Love Lane, this was likely as a result of the building plots planning. By 1870 St Mary's Road was established running almost north to south, the area developed into residential streets. 33 St Mary's Road is marked as within Providence Place and illustrated as a similarly laid out building as the existing structure today, including a back garden with central path and flanking trees.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was principally to determine the presence or absence of human use of the area, and the date, type, state of preservation, and extent of that use; to recover associated objects; and to record such evidence as does survive. For the purposes of this project, archaeologically significant remains and contexts are defined as remains and contexts relating to pre-1850 human use of the area. An additional aim is to identify and record the nature, dimensions, and relationship of natural deposits on the site and assess the potential of the natural deposits to contain or conceal archaeological remains, particularly from the prehistoric periods.

The areas observed during the watching brief consisted of foundation trenches, ground reduction and a soakaway.

Results

Fieldwork was undertaken under poor weather conditions with some heavy rain episodes. A Kubota 360° mini digger was used, equipped with a toothless bucket.

Footing Trenches (Figs 3 and 4a; Pls 1 and 2)

The foundation trenches measured 0.70m wide and were dug to a depth of between 1.03m and 1.30m.

At the eastern end of the foundation trenches the stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of a black (10YR 2/1) sandy clay (52) containing 'china' pottery and ceramic building material (CBM). It had also inclusions of frequent small pebbles, natural flints. This overlay 0.50-0.55m of a dark grey black (10YR 3/1) silty clay (53), containing occasional modern CBM fragments, small pebbles and natural flints. Natural geology was not observed in these parts of the trenches, closest to the house. This stratigraphy was observed in both the north and south footings and may represent levelling events from when the properties were built, with cut [1], dug into the natural geology and closest to the existing property likely forming part of this (Fig. 3). Its dark brown grey (10YR 3/2) silty clay fill with sandy patches (54), produced a bottle dated 1929 and other glass fragments. The infill also contained occasional natural flints. This deposit was not bottomed. Further westwards in the trench the natural geology (brickearth) became evident at c.0.80m below ground level (6.40m aOD) and a modern ditch [2] also appeared, cut into the brickearth and sealed by (53). It measured 1.30m wide and was at least 0.26m deep, as the base was not reached in the trenches. Its fill of black (10YR 2/1) sandy clay (55) contained modern glass and CBM.

The north-east to south-west foundation trench, opposite the one just described was only slightly different with a concrete slab, 0.10m thick, covering 0.30-0.32m of the dark brown grey (10YR 3/1) silty clay (53). There was a very local and limited redeposit of sandy natural clay (57) under it. It was 0.50m wide and 0.08m thick, Underneath was deposit (56), possibly a buried subsoil. It was a dark brownish grey (10YR 3/2) silty clay, very rooted, with no finds. The geology appeared at 0.80m below ground level (6.40m aOD), in line with what was observed in the other trench.

Finally the south-east to north-west foundation trench, connecting the previous two, was mainly showing a pit [3], cutting through deposits (53) and (56), as previously described. It was 3.50m wide and 0.83m deep and had a fill of dark grey black (10YR 2/1) clayey silt (58). This produced modern china, CBM and glass. The uppermost deposit here was garden soil (50) and not made ground. The brickearth was at about 6.35-6.40m aOD rising up to 6.85m aOD in the west corner of the foundation trenches.

After concreting the trenches the area within was reduced by 0.70m (Pl. 3) and showed the same deposits previously observed, with a range of modern finds not retained, and was not deep enough to expose further the natural geology.

Soakaway (Figs3 and 4b; Pl. 4)

A soakaway with a trench linking it to the foundation trench was observed in the backyard. The trench was 0.30m wide and was dug to a depth of 1.50m at its east end and 1.90m at its west end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of black (10YR 3/1) sandy clay garden soil (50) over 0.33m of dark grey black (10YR 3/2) silty clay (53), overlying brickearth natural geology, at c. 6.22m aOD.

The soakaway was located at the western end of the site and measured 1.20m x 1.20m and was dug to a depth of 1.40m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of the same black sandy clay garden soil (50), which contained items of plastic, flower pots, toy cars and modern bricks. This overlay 1m of the dark grey black silty clay (53), which contained china and CBM and had a modern truncation [4] evident on its southern side, containing concrete and cement. The natural brickearth was beginning to appear at the very base of the soakaway, at 6.2m aOD.

Finds

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the course of the watching brief. The lowest non-natural deposits reached contained clearly 20th-century material.

Conclusion

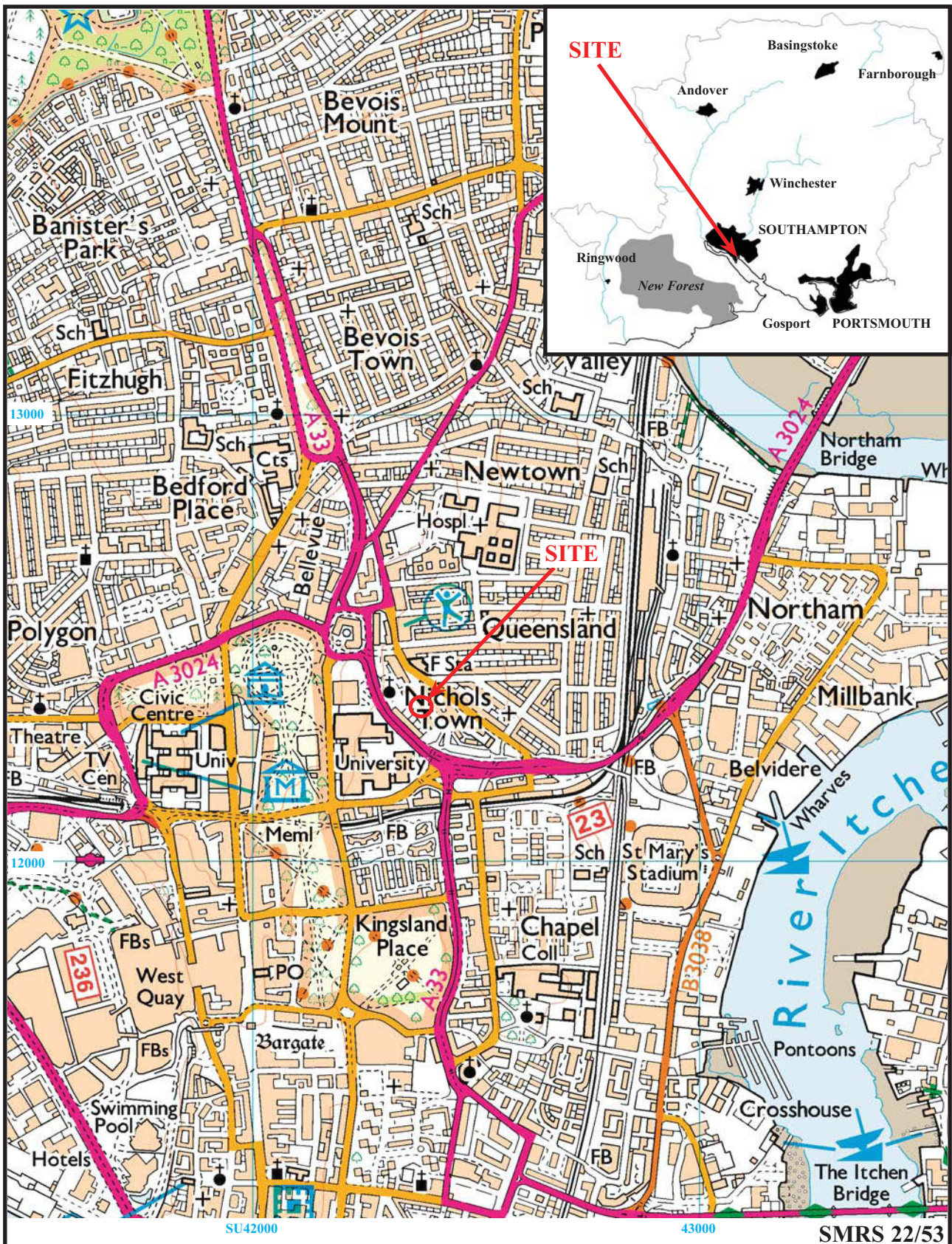
The watching brief was successfully carried out as intended. However, despite the potential for there to be archaeology on the site no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed during the course of the watching brief. Much of the site appeared to show evidence of levelling activity with datable material coming from the later 19th and 20th centuries, along with a few features of late Victorian or modern date, and which might have resulted in the variations in the level at which the natural geology was apparent.

References

- BGS, 1987, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 315, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Morton, A, 1992, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 1: excavations 1946-83, excluding Six Dials and Melbourne Street*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report **84**
Munsell, 2013, *Munsell Soil-Color Charts*, 2009 revised edition, Grand Rapids
NPPF 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
	50	Garden soil		
	52	made ground	19th-20th century	Pottery, CBM
	53	made ground	19th-20th century	Pottery, CBM
1	54	Modern truncation	19th-20th century	Glass
2	55	ditch	19th-20th century	Glass, CBM
	56	Buried subsoil?		
	57	Redeposited natural		
3	58	Pit?	19th-20th century	Pottery, glass, CBM
4	59	Truncation	20th century	Concrete, cement



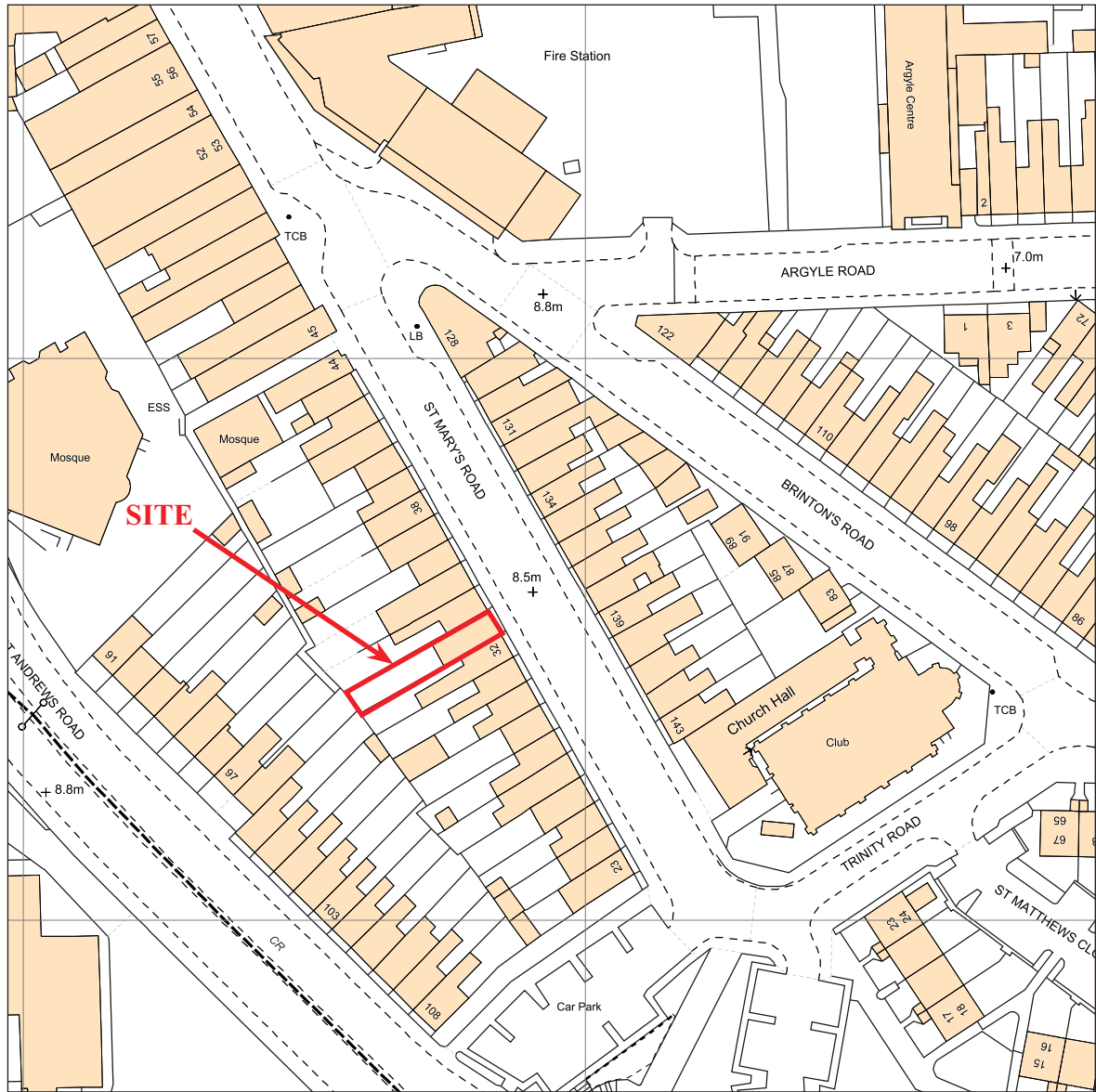
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Figure 1. Location of site within Southampton and
Hampshire.

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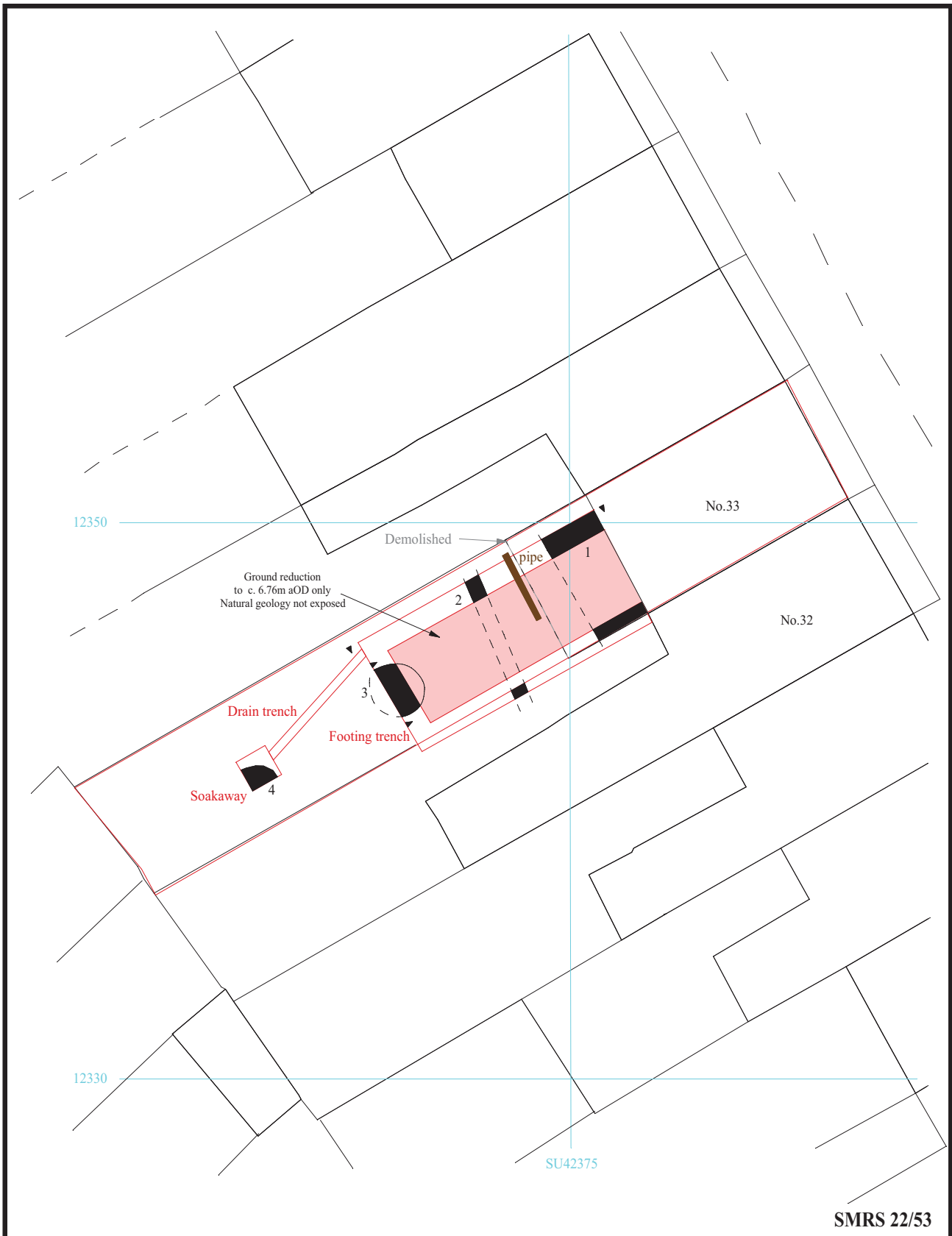
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off St. Mary's Road.

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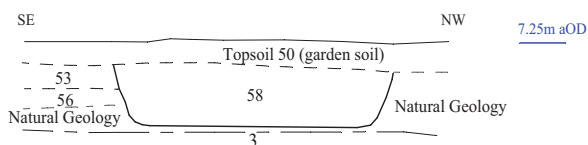
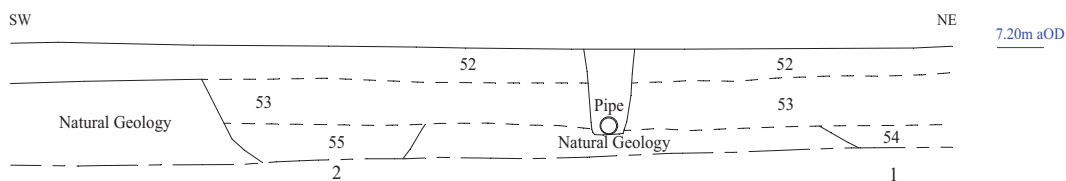
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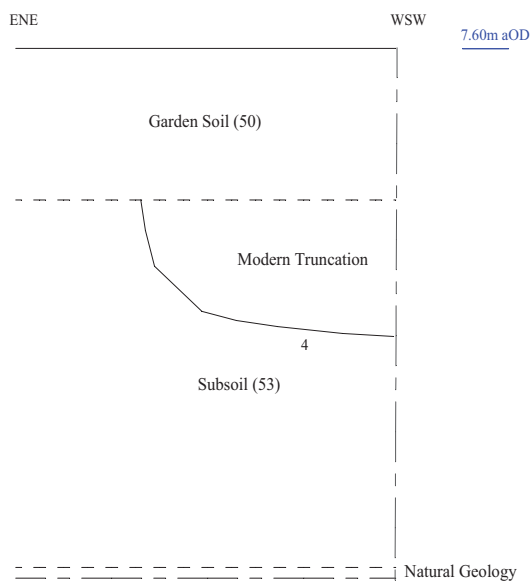
Figure 3. Location of observed areas showing Victorian/modern features.



a) Foundation Trench Sections



b) Soakaway Section



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Figure 4. Sections

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Plate 1. Site Shot, looking East, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Foundation Trench showing Ditch 2, looking North East, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Ground Reduction, looking West, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Soakaway, looking South, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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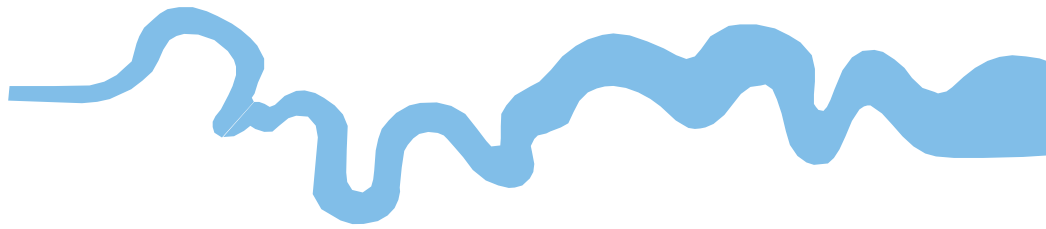
33 St Mary's Road,
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Plates 1 to 4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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